

ILLINOIS TECH UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Tuesday March 10, 2026
12:45pm
Online via Zoom
(pdf version available here)

Attending Voting Members: Murat Vural (MMAE), James Mann (INTM), Erdal Oruklu (ECE), Nicole Legate (PSYC), Victor Perez-Luna (CHBE), Emily Leiner (PHYS), Promila Dhar (BME), Fred Weening (AMAT), John Twombly (SSB), Jeremy Hajek (ITM), Kindon Mills (ARCH), Matthew Bauer (CS), Andy Howard (BIOL), Stephen Kleps (CAEE)

Chairing Meeting: Kathir Krishnamurthy

Also Attending: Taylor Rojas (UGAA), Todd Diel (FSN), Melisa Lopez (Student Success & Retention), Daniel Bliss (HASS), Yasmin Rodriguez-Escutia (Armour Acad Advisor), Nicole Novak (Libraries), Abby McGrath (Enrollment Services), Nick Menhart (VP Assessment and Accreditation), Jeff Wereszczynski (VP Acad Affairs), Gabrielle Smith (UGAA), Michael Arnaudo (Armour Acad Advisor), Kevin Cassel (VP Acad Transformation), Melanie Jones (Armour Acad Advisor), Jennifer deWinter (Dean LCS), Carly Kocurek (LCS), Gurram Gopal (ITM), Kyle Hawkins (AMP), David Minh (CHEM), Norma Scagnoli (CLI), Mary Jorgenson Sullivan (ELS), Keith Alexander (UGAA), Ayesha Qamer (Registrar), Katie Spink (Pre-Med), Pam Houser (INTM), Carrie Hall (Armour), Kiah Ong (AMAT), Rich Klein (SSB), Brian Casario (ELS), Kathy Nagle (ARCH), Diane Fifles (Univ Accred)

A quorum was reached and the meeting started at 12:46pm.

1. Approval of the proposed meeting agenda. Kathir Krishnamurthy shared the [proposed agenda](#) which had been previously distributed. John Twombly moved to accept the agenda and Jeremy Hajek seconded the motion. The motion to accept the agenda as presented passed without objection or abstention.
2. Approval of Meeting minutes. The minutes for the UGSC meeting on [March 3, 2026](#) had previously been made available on the UGSC website. Matt Bauer moved to accept the minutes and this was seconded by Andy Howard. The motion passed without objection or abstention.
3. The next item was a discussion of the timeline that needs to be met in order for a proposal to make it into the next AY bulletin. Kathir displayed the [document](#) which he had shown at the last meeting with the timeline he had worked out with UFC leadership. He emphasized that there will be electronic voting on all of the major items that are presented at today's meeting. He indicated that shortly after today's meeting he will send an email indicating each proposal to be voted on electronically. He asked members to

indicate whether they approve, disapprove, or abstain on each item and respond by email to both himself and Fred Weening. The deadline for casting those votes is the afternoon of March 17. He will then create a report for UFC which will be distributed that evening and they will have 48 hours to vote on those items in the report. The minor changes that are on today's agenda (listed after the major change items) can be voted on at the March 24 meeting and still be in time to make it into the bulletin. However, he would like to get through as many minor change items as possible today since there are a lot of items listed and he knows of several more that will be on the March 24 agenda.

Kindon Mills asked for clarification as to whether items proposed under the incubator policy were considered major or minor items. Kathir responded that they are considered minor items.

4. The next item was to vote on items originally discussed at the previous meeting.

- i. The first of these was a [proposal](#) to convert the Bachelor of Science in Business and Information Technology program from an incubator program to a regular program. John Twombly made the presentation. He briefly reminded the committee of what he had said at the last meeting: the program has been successful and Business would like to continue with this as a regular program. No changes aside from moving it off of incubator status are being proposed.

There were no questions for John. He made a motion to accept the proposal which was seconded by Fred Weening. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

- ii. The next item was similar to the previous: a [proposal](#) to convert the Bachelor of Science in Business and Psychology incubator program to a regular program. John briefly summarized the proposal.

There were no questions for John. Fred Weening moved to accept the proposal and this was seconded by Kindon Mills. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

- iii. Next was the second reading of a [proposal of a new program](#): the Bachelor of Facilities Management program. James Mann made the presentation. He reviewed the highlights of the presentation that he had made at the previous meeting.

Nick Menhart asked James if he had added the assessment document to the program in the form requested at the last meeting. James responded that he had sent Nick the requested document in email. Nick did not think he had received this, but agreed to handle this outside of the meeting time.

There were no further questions. Matt Bauer moved to accept the proposal and this motion was seconded by John Twombly. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

- iv. The final item in this category was a revision to the [minor in Biochemistry](#). David Mihn made the presentation. He indicated that the current minor in Biochemistry is too restrictive in its requirements. Few, if any, students have completed this minor because there are many prerequisites to the courses required in the minor. The proposed revision would require some more basic courses such as Organic Chemistry I, General Biology, and Introduction to Biochemistry; and then give students a large number of more advanced courses from which they need to select two.

There were no questions for David. Andy Howard moved that the proposal be accepted and this was seconded by Fred Weening. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

5. The next item consisted of several proposals that were new program proposals or major revision proposals that had not been discussed at a previous UGSC meeting. All of these programs presented at this meeting will be voted on through an electronic (i.e., email) vote. The deadline for this vote will be March 17 (members will have one week's time to consider the proposals and get departmental input).
 - i. The first of these was a proposal to [revise the Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering](#) program. Promila Dhar made the presentation. She explained that the current program has three tracks, but the presentation in the catalog gives the impression that these are three separate degree programs. The proposal is to do a significant reorganization of the program. The revision would have one general track and then three possible concentrations that students could follow. There would be no change to the overall number of credits required, but the new organization would give students more flexibility. A survey of students done by the department indicated that this flexibility was needed in order to graduate in a timely fashion especially if a student had a co-op or internship.
 - ii. Next was a proposal for a new program: [Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity and AI](#). Jeremy Hajek made the presentation

Jeremy explained that this program was designed to meet the requirements for being certified by the National Security Agency as a center of excellence in cybersecurity. The program uses the foundation of the Applied Cybersecurity and Information Technology program and then adds some brand new courses within ITM as well as CS to develop AI knowledge, skills, and abilities. As additional appropriate AI courses are created at Illinois Tech they will be added to the program. This degree is of a different nature than the other "plus AI" programs

that other departments have proposed and so the ITM department has proposed this as a regular new program as opposed to being proposed as an incubator program.

Fred Weening wanted to make sure that it was correct that this program is not requiring that students get any of the AI certificates. Jeremy responded that this is correct, although there is nothing preventing students from getting the certificates and there are 6 credit hours of free electives in the program.

Andy Howard asked if the ITM department currently has the expertise to teach all of the classes that would be required to get the center of excellence designation from the federal government. Jeremy indicated that with the current adjunct pool which includes experts in industry, the department believes all the courses needed can be taught.

Erdal Oruklu noted that in the CIM document there are some handwritten notes that indicate some courses listed will be swapped out for some CS courses. He wanted to know if those changes are in what we are voting on, or if the un-annotated CIM document is what we are voting on. Jeremy indicated that after the CIM document had been created, they got some good input from the CS department and they will be making those changes in the future. After some further discussion, Matt Bauer indicated that CS is fine with approving the un-annotated document (i.e., the document that is currently in CIM) at this time. Gurram Gopal, the chair of ITM, explained that at the time the CIM entry was made, the CS courses that are in the annotations did not yet exist. It is the intention that at a later time the program will be revised to include those CS courses.

- iii. Next was a new program being proposed as an incubator program: [Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with Artificial Intelligence](#). Rick Klein made the presentation. He explained that with the Business programs you could do a version with Finance Analytics or with Marketing Analytics; and they are taking those 15 credits out and replacing them with the courses needed for the AI certificates. One of those 6 courses, Bus 102, is already a requirement of the Business program, so the credits of the substitution exactly balance and the overall credits required for this new program is 120-122.

Nick Menhart wanted to confirm that the program would require the courses for the AI certificates, but instead of being awarded the certificates, students fulfilling the program requirements would get the “with Artificial Intelligence” name on their degrees. Nick asked: why not give the students the certificates? Rich indicated that he was operating under the assumption that the purpose of having the “with Artificial Intelligence” as part of the degree name was in lieu of getting the certificates, but he had no objection to giving the certificates. Nick indicated that

the “with AI” proposals considered last week from the Math department did include getting the certificates and the university should probably have a consistent policy on this.

Jeff Werezczynski commented that he didn't think we should be giving the degree and the certificate. He drew an analogy with a double major: in that case we only give both degrees if the student has enough credits for earning both.

Nick wanted to confirm with Math that their proposal was to give both the degree and the certificate. Fred Weening said yes, that was what the Math proposals were indicating. Nick said that everyone should get on the same page with this, but we don't need to do that today.

Nick also asked Rich if the assessment plan would be designed similarly to those in the math proposals; i.e., use the existing assessment plan for the Business degree together with the assessment plan that needs to be developed by the AI certificate steering committee for the AI certificates. Rich indicated that this was the intention of Business for the assessment plan.

Jeff indicated that he would have a consistent policy regarding awarding the certificates to present at the next meeting.

- iv. Next were three items being present by Andy Howard for the elimination of programs:
- [BS in Bioinformatics](#)
 - [BS in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics](#)
 - [BS in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics / MS in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics](#)

Andy started with the BS in Bioinformatics. He explained that the faculty who designed this program are no longer at Illinois Tech and there is very low enrollment. There are currently 4 students in the program. They are working on a teach out plan, but as Nick Menhart pointed out to them in an email it needs more specificity.

Fred Weening asked if putting the program on hiatus status is an option that the department would consider since then a teach-out plan isn't required. Andy replied that their Dean has strongly encouraged the department not to put these programs into hiatus status but to go straight to elimination. The Biology department has voted to eliminate these programs.

Jeff Werezczynski mentioned that from his perspective, if the intention is for eventual elimination it is better to do this from the onset rather than the go through hiatus status, since after 2 years on hiatus status the program comes

back to being an active program and then you have to go through the elimination process anyway. So putting it on hiatus is an extra step that can be avoided.

Nick Menhart agreed with Jeff's position. He mentioned that the sticking point is having a teach-out plan. Generally speaking departments have always agreed to offer students all necessary courses to graduate in the program as the teach-out plan and the accreditors are fine with this. If this isn't offered to students and the students complain, then the accreditors will be very sensitive to the student complaints. There is still some time to come up with a teach-out plan as he won't be bringing this to the Board of Trustees until their meeting in May.

There was no more discussion and so Andy moved on to the elimination of the BS in Molecular Biochemistry and Biophysics. He mentioned that this is a program overseen by a steering committee from Biology, Chemistry, and Physics and the steering committee has been meeting frequently. There are two students in the program and there are a few incoming students who have indicated that they want to major in the program.

Nick asked if the incoming students are going to be informed, prior to coming here, that the program is going to be eliminated. If not this would definitely be of concern to the accreditors.

Jennifer deWinter commented that they had a similar situation last year and are working with admissions to deal with the current situation regarding the incoming students that are interested in the program.

Andy mentioned that the other elimination proposal is essentially the same as what was just discussed and hoped that we could vote on these all at the same time.

- v. Next was a proposed major revision of a program that is currently on hiatus: [Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Nutrition](#). Todd Diel made the presentation.

He mentioned that previously the program had trouble attracting students entering the program at year 1. In fact all of the students that were in the program were transfer students. This combined with the small size of the faculty, made it difficult to offer all the courses needed for the program.

The program revision would change the program into one in which all students would transfer into the Illinois Tech program with an Associates Degree. Specifically the program is designed with students in the College of DuPage's Culinology and Food Science Applied Sciences degree program in mind. They have roughly 50 students a year in that program, and of those 50 students

roughly half go on to get a Bachelors degree. The proposed program would give these students a way to continue their education in the field and allow them to stay local to the Chicago area. There is no such option for students currently. The hope is that this program will also be attractive to other students in other associate degree programs; for instance Moraine Valley has a program in Culinary Management that might fit well.

The revised program would have a lot of free electives (47 credits) which would allow a lot of the transfer credits to count to the degree even if they can't be matched to existing required courses in the core curriculum. The overall required credits in the program have been reduced from 128 to 120.

Jeff Werezczynski asked Todd about the projected enrollment. From the CIM document he noted that the estimate would be about 5 students per year coming from the College of DuPage. Todd indicated that they are also talking to other schools, but without currently having a program in active status it is difficult to have some of those conversations. There is going to be a very extensive outreach from faculty in the department to local two-year schools if the revision gets approved.

Nick asked about the assessment plan and noted that the program prior to hiatus status hadn't submitted an assessment plan. Todd indicated that the department will submit an assessment plan.

Kindon Mills asked if this program would only be for transfer students, or if students currently at Illinois Tech could enter the program. Todd indicated that currently the proposal is just for transfer students from associate programs in fields related to Food Science and Nutrition.

Jennifer deWinter mentioned that there is also a possibility of creating a Food Science Plus module which would be something of a similar structure as the AI plus certificate program.

- vi. Next was a proposal of a new program: [Bachelor of Science in Game Design and Experiential Media with Specialization in Technical Game Development](#). Carly Kocurek made the presentation.

She explained that this program just takes the standard BS in GEM program and replaces the technical electives that students in that program choose from with specific Technical Game Development Requirements.

She also explained that the reason that this proposal is in the form of a separate program from the BS in GEM is that this is the only way that the Specialization in

Technical Game Development will appear on a student's diploma. Having this listed on the diploma is needed in this field.

Nick thanked Carly for including an assessment plan in the CIM document. He asked whether this proposal is a new program or a specialization in another program. Nick remarked that in just a few weeks he needs to report the exact number of programs to the accreditors. Carly replied that it is a specialization in an existing program. Nick indicated that this is a real issue because he needs to be able to track this somehow within CIM: even though in CIM it is listed as a new program, it isn't really a new program. Jeff Werezczynski acknowledged that this is something that needs to be fixed, but indicated that this wasn't the meeting where this needs to be discussed.

Kindon Mills indicated that Architecture is also interested in getting specializations indicated on diplomas and not just on the transcripts. Jennifer de Winter commented that in this particular case this really is necessary to make our students competitive. The Gaming Industry expects this information to be on the diploma and other schools do get the information listed on the diploma.

The discussion continued on this topic with suggestions of certificates or other types of credentials. Joe Gorzkowski asked whether this would have a separate program code within Banner. Ayesha replied yes, within Banner this will appear as a separate program.

Kindon asked why we aren't just considering this as a separate program since that would address the issues that Nick is having. Jennifer responded that it really comes down to a question of resources. There is more administrative overhead if this is a separate program.

As the discussion concluded, Kathir indicated that he would like to get to one of the minor items that could be voted on at this meeting, but he wanted to confirm that we still had a quorum. After a show of hands of voting members it was found that we were one member short of quorum.

Kindon made a motion to move all remaining items on today's agenda to the agenda of the next meeting on March 24. This motion was seconded by Jeremy Hajek. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

Kathir pointed out that we would have many agenda items at the next meeting that need to get passed then in order to make it into the bulletin for next year. Kindon made the suggestion that perhaps we could ask that voting members who have to leave to teach a class on March 24 could arrange for a proxy from their department to vote after they have to leave the meeting. Fred Weening indicated

that he thought this was a good idea. Kathir said he would send an email with this suggestion.

Kindon moved to adjourn the meeting and this was seconded by Andy Howard. The motion passed without objection or abstention.

The meeting adjourned at 1:55pm